

## THE BOOK OF LIFE

By Lorraine Viade, PsyD



*The Book of Life* is a delightfully ethnic story about two suitors after the same girl. Love triangles are usually entertaining. This one set in Mexico, framed with the bold and brilliant colors of the Day of the Dead, gives us whimsical insight into how important family is to this culture and why we all need to honor those who have gone before us. The music is lighthearted and fun with a lot of positive images and no stereotypes to speak of. There are beautifully animated characters in settings meant to embellish a particular way of thinking and being. This is a movie done with so much affection and love that you smile over and over again. It is an affirmation of both life and death. There is romance and adventure. There is whimsy for everyone.

The kids in the audience laughed a lot and adults related to the images of “Abuelita” (grandma). One boy said he had seen it four times. I can see why. There is so much in every frame that you would notice something new each time. The songs are familiar and catchy. There are positive role models about women, men, love, loyalty and family and how to resolve problems in life. In a world where so many families are broken, split or dysfunctional, *The Book of Life* is a refreshing respite. There is magic, mystery, legend and competition all played out among the living and the dead. The spirit of this movie is so positive that you don’t have to be of Mexican heritage to love it. You just have to have a family.

Every year, millions gather in cemeteries to pay their respects to their relatives. They have altars in their homes and offer gifts of their loved one’s favorites to honor and remember how much they love them. There is nothing spooky or supernatural about it, at least not in my book. We all want to remember those who are no longer with us. Some cultures do it more colorfully and openly. Death is something that will embrace us all one day and what we use to cope with that eventuality should be as life-affirming as this movie portrays it. It was the perfect Day of the Dead movie and will remind you of certain scenes of *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. So, if you didn’t get this treat in your Halloween basket, be sure to check it out now.

I give *The Book of Life* four Calaveras (skulls).

